ЯМЩИК

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The cover shown at the bottom of the previous page is franked with a block of four of the 4-kop. Romanov with the "crossed swords" overprint, plus a pair of 2-kop. Arms imperforate for a total rate of 20 kop.(overpaid by 5 kop.). It was mailed from Petrograd-14 two days later and addressed to the well-known French stamp dealer, Théodore Champion, of 13, rue Drouot in Paris. It has on the back a boxed Petrograd Censor No. 81 control marking. We can say with *virtual* certainty that this example also went through the mails. The number of cancellations and the manner of application thereof are proper.

During this period, such markings, both with and without other censor handstamps, are common. The question here is about the stamps themselves. Note the block of four of the 4-kop. Romanovs; they are overprinted with crossed swords and the words "FRATERNITY EQUALITY LIBERTY" in Russian. Without going into much detail, suffice it to say that most authorities consider them bogus. According to an article somewhere by the late Dr. G.B. Salisbury, he said that the No. 4 (20) April 1924 issue of "The Soviet Philatelist" under the editorship of F.G. Chuchin stated these overprints to be the work of Trachtenberg and others in Petrograd. The article went on to cite various authorities. It seems there is a consensus that some envelopes franked with these overprints went through the mails by favour. There are other stories that they were authorised by the Soviets at the Smol'nyi Institute, were on sale for two days in 1917 and still honoured in 1918. They were supposed to have been sold for double the face value, with the extra money going to feed the patrolling revolutionary soldiers (Catalogue Spécial des Timbres de Guerre de Russie, Yvert & Tellier, Paris, 1920). The cover shown here does not really prove anything, but it is in the right time-frame with both cds and censor control markings It is interesting and comments are invited.

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THE ACTIVITIES OF THE STOLOW BROTHERS IN THE RUSSIAN SPHERE

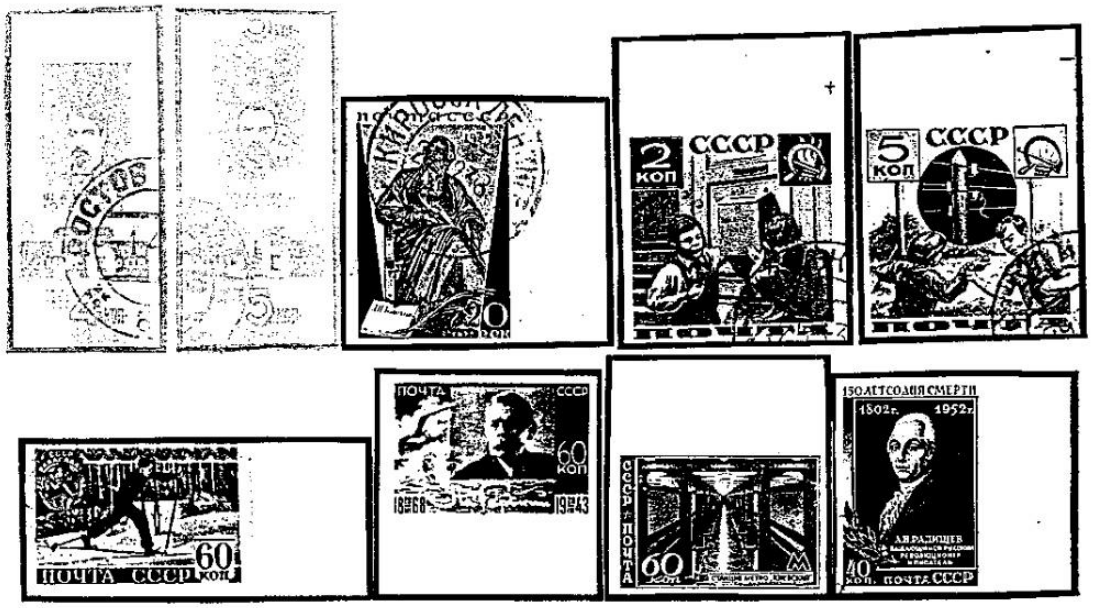
by Andrew Cronin.

Certain types of mystifying material keep turning up in our spheres of collecting and your editor has often been asked over the years to explain the significance and origin of such items. It was not possible to do so while the suspected instigators were still alive, but the field is now clear and the following comments should help to shed light on some puzzling material.

There apparently were two brothers, Julius and Harry Stolow, originally from Riga in Latvia. Your editor never met Harry, who was very active as a dealer in Munich after WWII. However, your editor knew Julius quite well some 30 years ago in New York City, where he ran the firm of J. & H. Stolow, including the Gold Medal Mail Auctions, a Wholesale New Issue Service, etc. He was a very likeable and charming person, who reminisced that, during their youth in Riga, his brother and he amused themselves by "creating" and applying mute cancellations to unused Romanov stamps. Of course, the result was that quite a few WWI "mutes" have never been identified by location to this day!

Both the brothers appear to have left Latvia and settled in Berlin, Germany during the 1920s. One sometimes comes across Soviet airmail covers sent to the firm in Berlin from Tashkent during that period. Julius was involved in a car accident in Berlin during the early 1930s and lost a leg. During that time, they were doing a fair amount of business with the Soviet Philatelic Association and, in buying quantities of the 1931 Dirigible Construction set, found that they had a surplus of the imperforate stamps. It appears that the bogus 11 1/2 line perforation was applied by them to even up the quantities, not only of that set but also of the succeeding North Pole airmails of that same year, as well as to "produce" fantail margins and imperforate-between varieties. It is ironic that this same 11 1/2 line perforation is also to be found on some values of the "Registered" set of Tuvan pictorials of April 1934.

With the rise to power of the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933, the brothers had to leave and Julius established himself in New York City. Together with the Wholesale New Issue Service, he also kept up his dealings with the Soviet Philatelic Association, which was later transformed into the Philatelic Department


2 КОП
СССР
5 КОП
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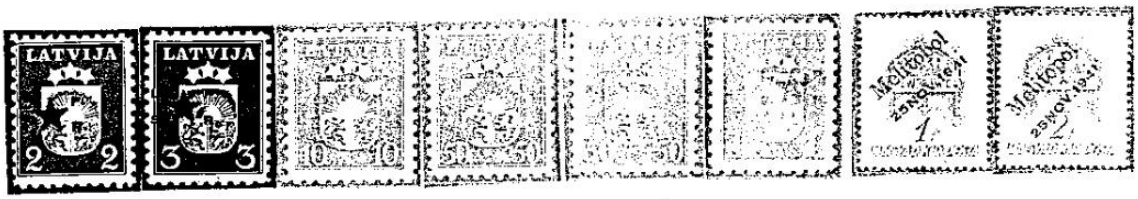
ПОЧТА СССР 60 КОП
ПОЧТА СССР
1868 1943
60 КОП
СССР ПОЧТА
60
150 ЛЕТ СО ДНЯ СМЕРТИ
1802г. 1952г.
А.Н.РАДИЩЕВ
40 КОП. ПОЧТА СССР


LATVIJA
2 2
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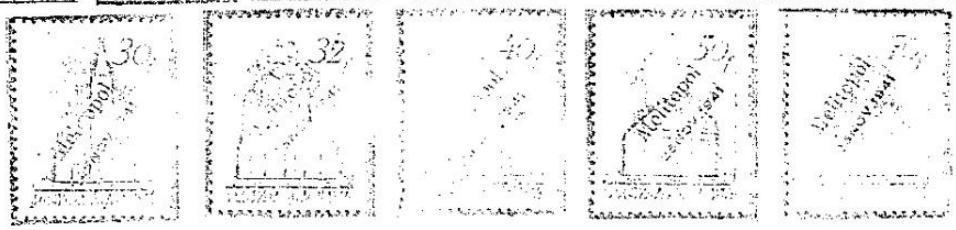
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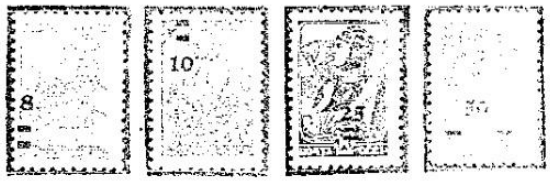

of "Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga". In his wholesale lists of new issues, Julius offered on at least a couple of occasions hitherto unrecorded "imperforate" varieties of Soviet stamps. It appears that the supplies he received from "Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga" sometimes contained a final horizontal or vertical row, with the last line-perforation missing in the margins, i.e. fantails. These were then trimmed and passed off as rare imperforates; an appalling case of philatelic vandalism, as fantails are interesting varieties in their own right. Examples of such trimming in the 1933-1952 period are shown in the first two rows on the previous page. These stamps **never** existed imperforate but, by the same token,Julius may not have been responsible for all the trimmed stamps featured here.

By the time the U.S. entered WWII on 7 December 1941, Julius had on hand some recently received new issues of Latvia, Hungary and the USSR. He decided to "expand" his stock by adding some overprints, as follows:-
(a) With the incorporation of Latvia into the USSR on 2 August 1940, he placed on his stocks of the Latvian Arms set an overprint consisting of a five-pointed star and the initials "L.P.S.R." (Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskā Republika = Latvian SSR), in *red* on the 2s., 3s., 10s., 50s. and 1 lats, as well as in *black* on other copies of the 50s. value (see the previous page). As stated above, he believed in expansion!

(b) As a result of the Nazi attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941, he apparently heard that the Ukrainian town of Melitopol' / Melitopil' had been taken by Hungarian forces on 25 November. That gave him the excuse to "recycle" 14 recent Hungarian definitives (see the previous page). However, he did not realise that, in Hungarian usage, the year is always given first, then the month and finally the day. An investigation some time ago by the Russia / USSR Study Group in Germany specifically named his company as the sole source of these overprints.

(c) The port of Odessa was valiantly defended by Soviet forces in the BOB (WWII), but finally fell to German and Roumanian units on 16 October 1941. That gave him the excuse to recycle four Soviet definitives with new surcharges, namely 8/5 kop., 10/15 kop., 25/30 kop. & 50/60 kop. (see at the bottom of the previous page). They were purportedly issued during the "Siege of Odessa". The new rates made no sense and these surcharges also exist doubled and inverted!

Julius may have carried out other manipulations in our spheres of collecting and any additional information would be much appreciated. In fairness to him, it should be stated that the Russian field was not his sole target. He was also involved in bogus issues for the Republic of Indonesia, the Moluccas etc. etc.

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PHILATELIC SHORTS

Is there a question or point that you would like to put across to the readers? Is there an interesting stamp cancellation or cover that you would like to describe? Is there an item in your collection that could use some clarifying information or might there be some gems of wisdom that you could impart on some newly acquired item?

Share your questions, thoughts and wisdom in the confines of a couple of paragraphs with the rest of our readers!